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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

DIA review completed

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Information as of 1600

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HIGHLIGHTS

US and South Vietnamese forces inflicted heavy casualties on a Viet Cong unit they trapped in the delta on 4 December.

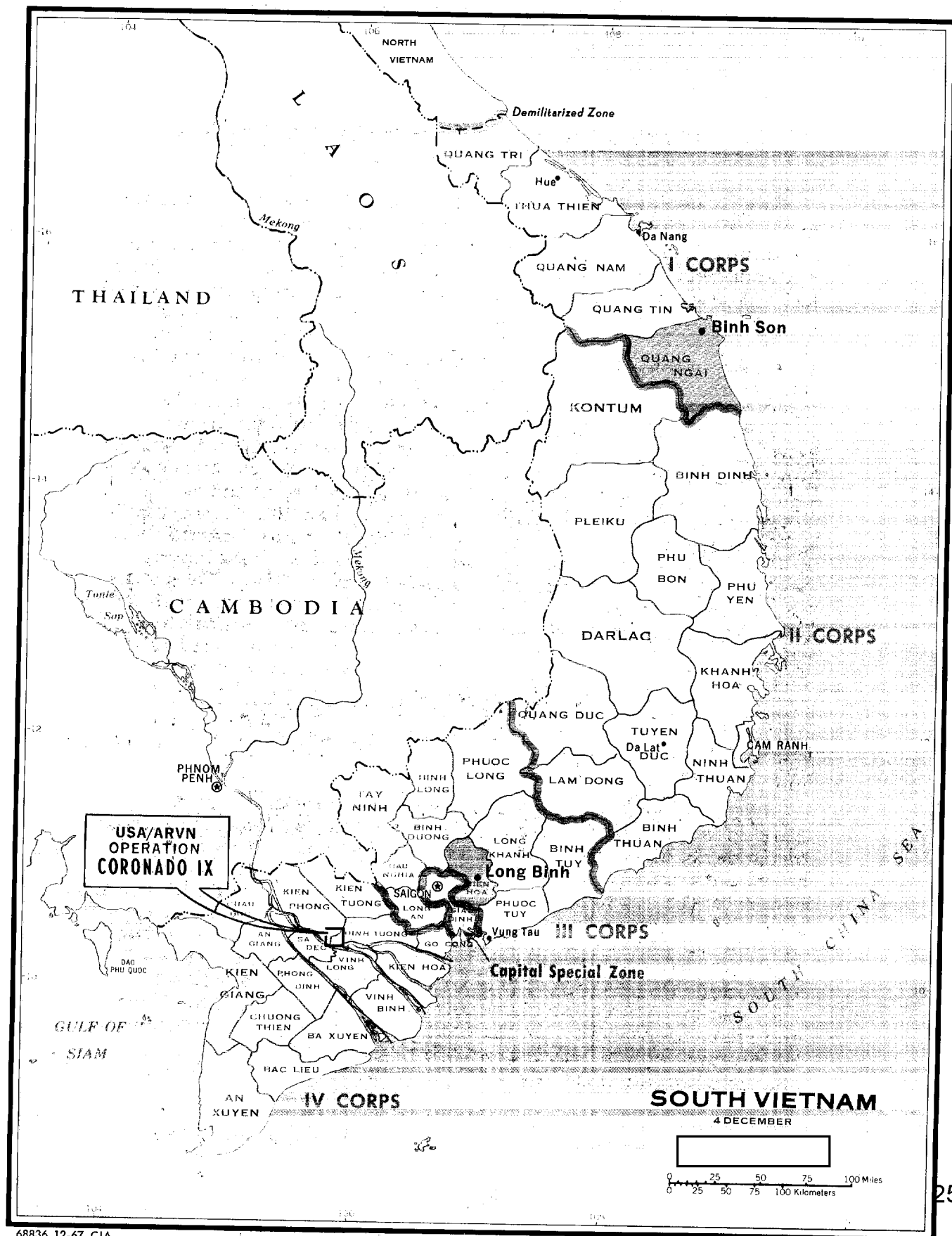
I. Military Situation in South Vietnam: US infantrymen and South Vietnamese Marines trapped a Viet Cong force in the Mekong Delta and killed nearly 200 in a day-long battle on 4 December. To the north allied forces in Quang Ngai Province repelled a heavy enemy attack at the Binh Son District Headquarters on 3 December. Viet Cong guerrillas also staged a series of attacks in the Saigon area on 4 December (Paras. 1-7). Recent well-coordinated Viet Cong attacks in the delta indicate that the enemy in this area has improved his command and control capability (Paras. 8-9).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam: Some 20 persons are to be tried on 19 December for their part in the 1966 Buddhist struggle movement in Hue and Da Nang (Para. 1).

III. North Vietnamese Military Developments: MACV reports that over 47,000 North Vietnamese troops infiltrated into South Vietnam through 30 November (Para. 1). Infiltrators in 1967 made heavy use of the Demilitarized Zone but the Laos panhandle was still the primary route (Paras. 2-9).

IV. Other Communist Military Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: The Soviets are again trying to persuade the US to prolong the projected holiday bombing pause (Paras. 1-3).



I. MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. US infantrymen and South Vietnamese Marines trapped a Viet Cong force in the Mekong Delta and reported killing nearly 200 in a day-long battle on 4 December. First reports put US casualties at four killed and 38 wounded and South Vietnamese at 15 dead and 50 wounded.

2. The fighting erupted 66 miles southwest of Saigon as an allied task force, part of Operation CORONADO IX, moved up a delta waterway in armored troop carriers. When the leading troop carriers carrying South Vietnamese Marines came under heavy Viet Cong fire from the right bank, they proceeded past the enemy positions, landed, and swept back toward the enemy. The Communists are believed to have been the 502nd Viet Cong local force battalion. At the same time one battalion of the 2nd Brigade, 9th US Infantry Division, landed from troop carriers below the Viet Cong and another battalion was landed by helicopter behind the enemy. As the US forces moved to link up with the South Vietnamese Marines, the armored troop carriers laid down a barrage of fire.

Viet Cong Attack in Quang Ngai

3. US, South Vietnamese, and South Korean forces assisted beleaguered South Vietnamese troops defending the Binh Son District Headquarters in northeastern Quang Ngai Province which came under heavy enemy attack early on 3 December. The attackers, probably from the 48th local force battalion, were driven off after a six-and-a-half-hour battle which left 52 enemy soldiers killed. Allied casualties included 40 killed (22 civilians) and 12 wounded. The recent increase in enemy activity in Quang Ngai suggests that Viet Cong units there may be attempting to launch their winter-spring campaign.

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Guerrilla Activity Near Saigon

4. Viet Cong guerrillas staged a series of attacks in the Saigon area on 4 December. Casualties were light but damage was considerable.

5. The first attack shortly after midnight was against the US supply complex at Long Binh in Bien Hoa Province--the largest US base in South Vietnam. Four enemy rockets struck the ammunition storage area but did little damage. Other rockets set fire to nearly 1.5 million gallons of liquid asphalt and other building supplies. This was the second attack on Long Binh in less than a week.

6. Later in the day some 13 miles east of Saigon the enemy used recoilless rifle and small-arms fire to attack a river convoy consisting of four ammunition barges and a floating crane. One barge was sunk, another partially sunk, and the three remaining barges damaged. Some 21,000 rounds of 4.2-inch mortar and 105-mm. howitzer ammunition were lost.

Enemy Command and Control

7. During the night of 24-25 November in the Mekong Delta, Viet Cong gunners shelled ten district towns, 12 government outposts, two South Vietnamese Army night defensive positions, and two airfields. The Viet Cong also launched ground attacks against seven outposts on the same night and cratered Route 4--the main route from Saigon southward into the delta--in nine places. Surges of coordinated attacks like these have occurred periodically in the delta since late October. Prior to that time coordinated enemy activity in the delta was generally confined to a selected province. The recent attacks show that the Viet Cong have considerably improved their command and control capability in this region.

8. The attacks were timed with large-scale Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army offensives in the Loc Ninh - Song Be - Bu Dop area north of Saigon and in the Dak To area of the central highlands, and

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are probably part of the Communist country-wide winter-spring campaign. In recent weeks examples of closer coordination between Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces have been noted in a number of other cases. Viet Cong local forces south of Da Nang in the coastal districts of Quang Nam and Quang Tin provinces have sustained a damaging campaign of sabotage and harassment in an effort to relieve pressure on the main force regiments of the North Vietnamese 2nd Division operating in the Que Son Valley.

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A skirmish on 20 October near Phu Cat in which both the North Vietnamese 18th Regiment and the Viet Cong 50th Battalion were identified confirms that North Vietnamese and Viet Cong units are conducting joint operations in Binh Dinh. Similar close coordination between North Vietnamese and Viet Cong units has been noted in Phu Yen and Khanh Hoa provinces along the central coast and in the highlands of Kontum and Pleiku provinces.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. The government will try leaders of the 1966 Buddhist struggle movement in Hue and Da Nang. A government official announced on 4 December that about 20 persons implicated in the struggle will stand trial before Saigon's special military court on 19 December. The 20 include several army officers and Nguyen Van Man, the former mayor of Da Nang.

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INFILTRATION TOTALS SINCE 1 October 1965

Based on MACV Holdings as of 30 November 1967

		ACCEPTED			POSSIBLE	MONTHLY TOTALS
		CONFIRMED	PROBABLE	TOTAL		
1965	October	7,000	-	7,000	400	7,400
	November	3,300	-	3,300	1,000	4,300
	December	200	400	600	800	1,400
	Sub-Total	10,500	400	10,900	2,200	13,100
1966	January	4,200	2,000	6,200	3,000	9,200
	February	6,800	2,300	9,100	2,100	11,200
	March	11,800	1,300	13,100	3,600	16,700
	April	100	500	600	600	1,200
	May	1,300	500	1,800	3,600	5,400
	June	12,300	700	13,000	1,700	14,700
	July	4,000	700	4,700	4,200	8,900
	August	1,800	400	2,200	3,700	5,900
	September	1,400	700	2,100	700	2,800
	October	100	600	700	5,200	5,900
	November	500	100	600	600	1,200
	December	1,000	600	1,600	2,500	4,100
	Sub-Total	45,300	10,400	55,700	31,500	87,200
1967	January	1,000	800	1,800	3,700	5,500
	February	1,700	2,000	3,700	1,500	5,200
	March	4,300	400	4,700	4,500	9,200
	April	4,000	600	4,600	300	4,900
	May	4,000	1,300	5,300	1,500	6,800
	June	4,200	-	4,200	1,700	5,900
	July	800	100	900	900	1,800
	August	3,500	300	3,800	1,400	5,200
	September	400	100	500	900	1,400
	October	500	-	500	700	1,200
	November	-	-	-	-	-
	Sub-Total	24,400	5,600	30,000	17,100	47,100
	TOTALS	80,200	16,400	96,600	50,800	147,400

MONTHLY AVERAGE (1 OCT 1965 - 31 MAY 1967)**ACCEPTED: CONFIRMED AND PROBABLE 4,350****TOTAL ACCEPTED AND POSSIBLE 6,600**

ACCEPTED INFILTRATION: Those NVA personnel, groups, and units which have entered South Vietnam and are carried in the confirmed or probable categories.

CONFIRMED: A confirmed infiltration unit/group is one which is accepted in South Vietnam on the basis of information provided by a minimum of two POWs or returnees (Hoi Chanh) from the unit/group, or two captured documents from the unit, or a combination of personnel and documents.

PROBABLE: A probable infiltration unit/group is one which is accepted in South Vietnam on the basis of information provided by one POW or returnee (Hoi Chanh) from the unit/group, or a captured document, supported by information from other sources which can be evaluated as probably true.

POSSIBLE INFILTRATION: A possible infiltration unit/group is one which may be in South Vietnam on the basis of information which can be evaluated as possibly true even though no POW, returnee (Hoi Chanh), or document is available to verify the reports.

NOTE: In addition to the infiltrators which fall into the above infiltration categories, other units or groups have been mentioned in agent reports, captured documents, interrogation reports and sightings by friendly forces, but the information is insufficient to warrant inclusion of these units or groups in any of the above categories.

MONTH OF INFILTRATION: The month established as the date an infiltration unit/group crosses the international border into South Vietnam for the first time.

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. MACV reports that the evidence so far shows over 47,000 North Vietnamese troops have infiltrated into South Vietnam during the first 11 months of 1967. Of these, 24,400 are listed by MACV as confirmed, 5,600 as probable, and 17,100 as possible.

2. An analysis of infiltration units and groups which arrived in South Vietnam through 31 October indicates that at least 60 percent of the infiltrators were replacements or fillers for North Vietnamese, Viet Cong, and local force units. The percentage probably is even higher because the disposition or assignment of a number of infiltration groups is not yet known.

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Routes of Infiltration

4. Infiltration in 1967 has been marked by the use of the Demilitarized Zone.

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Use of the Demilitarized Zone complicates infiltration analysis because units suffering casualties in the area often return to North Vietnam for replacements, and it frequently is impossible to fix the number of new infiltrators when these units return to South Vietnam. There are also some North Vietnamese units which have taken part in actions in the area but have not yet been included in MACV's infiltration statistics.

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5. The infiltration trails which extend through the Laos panhandle continue to be the primary means of travel.

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6. Sea infiltration appears to have been almost totally thwarted. Only six infiltrators were detected entering South Vietnam by sea in the first ten months of 1967, and all of these were captured.

7. An additional 6,800 infiltrators--some 17 percent--came by unknown routes. It is believed most of these probably came through Laos.

Indications of Additional Infiltration

8. There are indications of other large-scale infiltrations which are not yet reflected in MACV's statistics. Prisoners and defectors in recent weeks, particularly in the central highlands, have identified a large number of new infiltration units and groups. In addition, there are reports of additional regimental-size formations--such as the 40th Artillery Regiment, which have not yet met all of MACV's criteria. There is a time lag of six months and longer for the detection of a new infiltration group, and the problem is exacerbated by replacement personnel who are even harder to detect.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. This year's Soviet effort to persuade the US to prolong the projected holiday bombing pause has begun. Last week a Soviet diplomat in London, speaking "personally," told [redacted] that he felt the Soviet Union could persuade Hanoi to enter negotiations if the US announced no terminal date for the bombing pause.

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3. More such approaches can be expected, but there is no indication that Moscow is acting at Hanoi's behest.

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